



To Your Health

A Patient Health Education Publication

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Miami VA Healthcare System

Volume 1 Issue 1



Thanks to all those veterans who submitted names for the newsletter, the naming committee composed of a volunteer, two patients, and two staff had over 100 names to choose from. After much hard work and a count of the votes we came up with the winner!

Congratulations to Henry "Neil" Ahrens for winning the newsletter naming contest. Neil, as he prefers to be called, served in the Army Airborne Infantry (173rd and 82nd) from November 1965-November 1968, the last three of those years (1966-1968) in Vietnam.

Neil has worked for the Miami VA Hospital in Acquisition and Material Management Service for 20 years; he was previously employed at the Gainesville VA.

As a patient at the Miami VA, Neil said, "I've noticed how over the last 6 years everyone has become more patient friendly and seem to really care about my health. That's when I thought 'To your health' the name for the newsletter."

It is with great pleasure that we present to you, the Veterans of the Miami VA Healthcare System, your health education and wellness newsletter.

As Neil says...To Your Health!

January is *Healthy Weight Month*

10 Health Gains from a 10% Weight Loss

10. Lowers the risk of having gall bladder disease.
9. Lowers the risk of sleep apnea.
8. Lowers the risk of congestive heart failure.
7. Reduces the risks of some types of cancer.
6. Puts less stress on your bones and joints.
5. Lowers the risks of heart disease, heart attacks, and stroke.
4. Reduces the risk of developing diabetes.
3. Reduces blood pressure.
2. Improves your ability to move and do activities.
1. The # 1 reason to lose weight is ...

You will feel better!

February is *Healthy Heart Month*

Coronary heart disease artery disease (CAD), heart disease.

What

As coronary heart disease the heart occurs and then develop:

- **Angina** - Pain or discomfort when the heart is not

- **Heart Failure** - Occurs when the heart cannot pump efficiently to the ankles, legs, and lungs

- **Heart Attack** - Happens when part of the heart is blocked and the cells in that part of the heart begin to die.

Information for Veterans About the New Medicare Prescription Drug Benefits

Beginning January 1, 2006, Medicare prescription drug coverage (Medicare Part D) will be available to everyone with Medicare Part A or B coverage. Veterans who choose to participate may sign up for Medicare's new prescription drug coverage starting November 15, 2005 through May 15, 2006. Participating in the Medicare prescription drug coverage is voluntary. Each individual must decide whether to participate based on his or her own circumstances.

How This Affects You

- You must decide whether to enroll in a Medicare Part D plan based on your own situation.
- Your VA prescription drug coverage will not change based on your decision to participate in Medicare Part D.
- VA prescription drug coverage is considered by Medicare to be at least as good as Medicare Part coverage, known as creditable coverage.
- If your spouse is covered by Medicare, he or she must decide whether to enroll in a Medicare Part D plan regardless of your decision to participate.

What Does "Creditable Coverage" Mean?

Enrollment in the VA health care system is creditable coverage. This means that VA prescription drug coverage is at least as good as the Medicare Part D coverage.

Veterans enrolled in the VA health care program who choose not to enroll in a Medicare Part D plan before May 15, 2006 will not have to pay a higher premium on a permanent basis.

If you disenroll in VA health care or if you lose your enrollment status through no fault of your own (such as a decision by VA to further restrict access to certain Priority Groups), you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty.

Veterans Health Eligibility Information

<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/home/hecmmain.asp>

1-877-222-8387

For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage

Read the "Medicare & You 2006" handbook you should have received in the mail in October 2005. It includes detailed information about Medicare prescription drug plans, including which plans will be available in your area. After that time, if you need help choosing a Medicare prescription drug plan that meets your needs, you can do the following:

- Visit **www.medicare.gov** on the web and select "search tools" to get personalized information.
- Call your **State Health Insurance Assistance Program** (see your copy of the "Medicare & You 2006" handbook for their telephone number). You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), or look at www.medicare.gov on the web to get the telephone number. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- **Call 1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Retrieved from <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/costs/MedicarePrescriptionDrugCoverage-PartD.asp?css=main-p2> (12/22/05)

Author: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Did You Know?

The use of expressive arts provides a safe, non-judgmental setting to facilitate personal growth and healing.

To use art expressively provides an area for Veterans to discuss feelings and express them through visual art, movement, sound, writing, or drama.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival provides setting and nationwide search to identify artists of all types, and give them the opportunity to exhibit their work, receive recognition, validation, rehabilitation, and self-confidence.

For more information call Janet Dapprich or Shawn Buller at ext. 4143 regarding the **March 3, 2006 Creative Arts Festival**